

October 12, 1964

Statement in Response to Queries
from James E. Webb, Administrator,
National Aeronautics and Space Administration

The Voskhod flight is a significant space accomplishment. It is clear indication that the Russians are continuing a large space program for the achievement of national power and prestige. The Russians started early in building big boosters and reached the flight phase seven years ago. Since then they have used this capability to do many things in space and we have been in a period of catching up. The Saturn V booster is designed to overcome that lead. It is a vehicle which can put 240,000 pounds into orbit as against the 10-15,000 pound class spacecraft the Russians have been flying.

The United States has more than tripled its industrial, scientific, engineering and governmental space capability over the past three years. We are conducting an orderly, fast-paced program of development flights of the very large Saturn rocket, followed by development flights of large spacecraft and then manned flights to determine the capability of man in space.

The Russians have not disclosed their plans for space. We must assume they will do their best and keep us at a disadvantage if they can. Decisions as to any modifications of our present program cannot be made on the basis of one flight or a single series of flights. If a speed-up in our program should be indicated, we are in a position to move faster. If our work opens up new opportunities, such as we have found in the use of weather and communications satellites, we are in a position to take advantage of them. If operational systems are needed, we will be able to build them.

The Saturn V is the U.S. bid for space supremacy in manned operations. It is still a good bid and our policy is to proceed rapidly to the flight phase, although it is still two years away.